



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman**

U.S. Special Envoy Gration Trip Summary

Office of the Spokesman
Washington, DC
November 27, 2009

The United States Special Envoy to Sudan, Scott Gration, has just returned from a November 16-November 23 trip to Sudan. He traveled to the areas of Khartoum, Abyei, and Darfur.

In Khartoum, the two parties to the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA)—the National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM)—continue their discussions to resolve key outstanding issues relating to the 2010 national elections and the 2011 referenda in Southern Sudan and Abyei. Without immediate resolution of these disputes, we are concerned about the chances for conducting credible elections and referenda. Unfortunately, the parties have not yet demonstrated the political will necessary to achieve resolution on these difficult and sensitive issues.

Special Envoy Gration also traveled to Abyei to observe the progress in implementing the July 2008 Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) ruling on the boundaries of this area. There is an urgent need for enhanced on-the-ground communication about the PCA decision, including its impact on local communities, in order to allay community concerns and prevent potential conflict.

In Darfur, Special Envoy Gration's meetings concentrated on the security situation along the Chad-Sudan border. In a disturbing trend, lawlessness and banditry have heightened tensions along the border. Addressing these ongoing security concerns is crucial for achieving a lasting peace in Darfur.

Finally, the Special Envoy visited four voter registration centers in Khartoum, Abyei, and Darfur, as registration for the 2010 national elections is currently underway. It is critical that Sudanese citizens take advantage of the recently announced one-week extension to register to vote, as it is the only way for the Sudanese people to maintain their right to participate in the national elections in April 2010.

PRN: 2009/1181

#